

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

Vol. 27 No. 3

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Whole No. 318

## The Pseudonyms of Edward S. Ellis

### Part III

by Denis R. Rogers



One of the rarest Ellis items.  
(From the Rogers collection)

## The Pseudonyms of Edward S. Ellis

by Denis R. Rogers

### Part III — New Pseudonyms

**Thomas A. C. Alcott:** "A Young Inventor. In Four Parts" by Thomas A. C. Alcott ("The Boys' Holiday, Vol. 2, No. 10 (36), 16 Sep. 1890 to No. 13 (39), 7 Oct. 1890) has so much in common with the plot of "Dorsey, the Young Inventor" by Edward S. Ellis, A.M. (Fords, Howard & Hulbert, New York, Cloth, 1899, True Grit Series No. 1), that it may be termed the prototype of that tale. The young inventor in both stories is the son of a brickmaker and has a flair for invention. It is interesting to recall that Ellis' father, Sylvester Ellis, owned and operated a brickworks in Ewingville, a hamlet near Trenton, New Jersey. It is also interesting to recall that Ellis patented a number of inventions himself, although none turned out to be a commercial proposition. Thomas A. C. Alcott must be regarded as a very probable Ellis pen name indeed.

**Henry R. Brisbane:** "Long Jim the Scout or The Death Valley of the Apaches" by Henry R. Brisbane (Frank Leslie's Boys' & Girls' Weekly, Vol. XXVII, No. 662, 28 Jun. 1879 to Vol. XXVII, No. 677, 11 Oct. 1879) is a sequel to "The Phantom of the Prairie or Strange Adventures in the

Southwest" by Lieut. R. H. Jayne (Frank Leslie's Boys' & Girls' Weekly, Vol. XIX, No. 469, 16 Oct. 1875 to No. 489, 4 Mar. 1876). Therefore, since Lt. R. H. Jayne was an Ellis pen name, so was Henry R. Brisbane.

**Captain Crabbe:** "The Irish Hunter" was announced in The American Booksellers' Guide" (American News Company, New York, Vol. IV, No. 9, 1 Sep. 1872, Page 304, August Publications—George Munro, New York) as by Captain Crabbe. Munro's Ten Cent Novels No. 236 was "The Irish Hunter or Pat O'Dogherty's Adventure among the Redskins" by Mahlon A. Brown (George Munro, New York, 30 Aug. 1872). Since Mahlon A. Brown is now a fully proven pen name of Ellis, Captain Crabbe must be classified as one of his possible pseudonyms.

**Edwin S. Deane:** In his article, "The Bandit Brothers of Old Missouri", ("Dime Novel Round-Up", Vol. 23, No. 9 (276), 15 Sep. 1955), Mr. J. E. Leithead ascribes No. 28 of Street & Smith's Secret Service Series ("Bob Younger's Fate" by Edwin S. Deane, February 1890) to Edward S. Ellis. In a later article, "Wyoming's Wild Riders and Other Hunted Men" (Dime Novel Round-Up", Vol. 25, No. 3 (294)

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15 Mar. 1957), Mr. Leithead is not so positive about Ellis authorship of No. 43 of Street & Smith's Log Cabin Library ("Red Rube Burrows, The King of the Outlaws" by Edwin S. Deane, 9 Jan. 1890).

Unfortunately Mr. Leithead neglected to record his source of information, although he thinks it may have been the late W. C. Miller (Letter to the writer, dated 8 Oct. 1955). However, in his "Dime Novel Authors, 1860-1900" (Ralph Cummings, Grafton, Mass., September 1933), Miller shows Edwin S. Deane as a real person. Anyway there have been found to be so many errors in Miller's pioneer work, that it cannot be regarded as a reliable authority.

Nevertheless, on background information it seems possible that Edwin S. Deane was in fact one of Ellis' pen names. Deane was the maiden name of Ellis' first wife and was also used as the by-line of a few sketches for Beadle & Adams, the first of which I have found a record being, "John Western's Adventure" (Beadle's Weekly, Vol. I, No. 23, 21 Apr. 1883).

Since Ellis was divorced from his first wife in 1887, these early sketches are important, in that Ellis would hardly have used the name for the first time after that unhappy event.

It has been suggested that bandit tales were outside Ellis' normal scope, but it is difficult to be emphatic that anything was outside the scope of such a prolific and versatile writer. Certainly Ellis wrote many quite colorful detective tales, some of them with a bandit background. A reading of "Bob Younger's Fate" and "Red Rube Burrows" discloses that they are not particularly lurid, but a study of the style proved inconclusive on the question of Ellis authorship.

Except for two periods (1862 to 1866 and 1890 to 1894), Ellis wrote little for Street & Smith, although they reprinted much he had written for other publishers. We have no definite information as to when "Bob Younger's Fate" and "Red Rube Burrows" first appeared, but we do know first publication in book form to have

been the editions referred to above. It will be seen that those dates fall within the second period mentioned and so the tales could have been originals for Street & Smith.

So few tales and sketches by Edwin S. Deane have come to light that it is impossible to do more than ask the reader to form his own opinion on the slender evidence available.

The Ex-Reporter: "The Diver's Peril" by Capt. "Bruin" Adams (The Saturday Journal, Vol. II, No. 62, 20 May 1871, Beadle & Co., New York) was reprinted in "Beadle's Weekly" (Vol. I, No. 42, 1 Sep. 1883, Beadle & Adams, New York) with The Ex-Reporter as author. Therefore, since Capt. "Bruin" Adams is a proven pen name of Edward S. Ellis, The Ex-Reporter must also have been an Ellis pseudonym, whenever it is found in Beadle publications.

Edward Ellis: The Barry Ono collection in the British Museum includes two stories by Edward Ellis, "The Buccaneers or The Hidden Treasure" (92 pages, 34 chapters) and "Ruth the Betrayer or The Female Spy" (411 pages, 155 chapters). Both were published by John Dicks of London. The Ono collection also contains two other stories under John Dicks' imprint, "The Felon's Daughter" (178 pages, 78 chapters) and "Rook the Robber or London Fifty Years Ago" (240 pages, 77 chapters both by the author of "The Daughter of Midnight." These novels are undated, although "Rook the Robber" is marked, 1863, in pencil on the title page.

An article by the late Frank Jay in "The Manchester City News" for 12 July 1917, mentions "The Daughter of Midnight or The Mysteries of London" by Edward Ellis as a serial which ran in Volume 2 (1862) of "The Halfpenny Gazette," a London story paper. (Letter from Mr. Ralph Adimari to the writer dated 28 Oct. 1957).

"The Buccaneers" also ran as an anonymous serial in "Reynolds Miscellany" (Vol. XXXIV, No. 877, 1 Apr. 1865 to Vol. XXXV, No. 890, 1 July 1865). During the next two years it was followed by five more serials



by the author of "The Buccaneers," namely "The King's Highway. A Romance of the London Road a Hundred Years Ago," "A White Face and a Black Mask," "A London Mystery," "The Wedding Peal" and "The Clock-Chamber."

No information whatsoever has been brought to light about Edward Ellis, so it seems likely that it was a pen name of an English writer of the period. While the similarity with Edward S. Ellis has suggested that he was the author, I do not think such a theory can be supported at all.

All the nine Edward Ellis tales seen by me are in the style of the English story papers of the period. Most of the backgrounds suggest an English author or a long residence in England. Furthermore, if Edward S. Ellis had ever lived in London, that fact would surely have been recorded in his son's memoirs. Not only is there no such record, but it is clearly implied that Ellis' early married life, which covers the years in question, was all spent in New Jersey.

In all the hundreds of full length stories known to have been written by Edward S. Ellis, only one has an English background. That was "The Golden Arrow. A Romance of England a Thousand Years Ago" ("Saturday Night", Vol. XXXIV, No. 47, 10 July 1897 to Vol. XXXV, No. 8, 9 Oct. 1897), although probably written years earlier, having been first announced in "Saturday Night," Vol. X, No. 8, 16 Nov. 1872. None of the Edward Ellis tales are about that era.

Thus, although lacking proof, I have no doubt in my own mind that whoever wrote the Edward Ellis stories, it was definitely not Edward Sylvester Ellis.

**Fred F. Foster:** This name is put forward as a possible Ellis pen name with diffidence, for the evidence is purely circumstantial and by no means strong.

Fred F. Foster has been noted as author of 66 sketches, of which 9 appeared in "Saturday Journal" (1881 to 1882), 1 in "Beadle's Weekly" (1883), 2 in "Golden Argosy" (1883 and 1884), 3 in "The New York Week-

ly" (1883), 48 in "Banner Weekly" (1886 to 1893), 2 in "Vickery's Fireside Visitor" (1887) and 1 in "Good Stories" (1904).

The third edition (perhaps all editions) of Beadle's Dime Library No. 471 (2 Nov. 1887) "The Heart of Oak Detective or Zigzag's Full Hand. A Romance of Texan Troughs and Texan Trails" by E. A. St. Mox—also contains three detective sketches by Fred F. Foster, Ex-Detective, one of which is entitled, "Proverbs V. 22."

The coupling of the three Fred F. Foster sketches with a long detective tale by Ellis—E. A. St. Mox is a proven Ellis pseudonym—caused me to investigate the possibility of Ellis authorship. Nothing conclusive has come to light, but the following points in favor of the theory may be cited:

- (1). All the known Fred F. Foster tales appeared in papers to which Ellis contributed and at times when he was so doing.
  - (2). Most of the stories are detective tales, a type of story frequently written by Ellis.
  - (3). Ellis was unashamedly religious. He frequently used religion in his plots and sometimes in his titles. Thus "Proverbs V. 22" mentioned above and "John VIII:34" ("Banner Weekly," Vol. X, No. 491, 9 April 1892) caught my eye.
  - (4). Significantly one of the two "Golden Argosy" sketches ("Benedict Arnold," Vol. 2, No. 23 (75), 10 May 1884) appeared during the period when that paper was reprinting parts of The Dime Tales, Traditions and Romance of Border and Revolutionary Times, edited (and possibly written) for Beadle & Co., by Edward S. Ellis in 1863 and 1864. At that time Frank Munsey was struggling and there is evidence that Ellis was one of the mainstays of his "Golden Argosy."
- Perhaps I should mention that in his "Dime Novel Authors," W. C. Miller shows Roger Starbuck as the owner of this pen name. As Roger Starbuck was not a real author, but a pen name of Augustus Comstock ("The House of Beadle & Adams," Vol. II, Page 261), we can safely dis-



regard that contention.

The evidence was so thin that I was in two minds about including Fred F. Foster in this article. I decided to do so because (a) it is a name about which I have a strong personal "hunch" and (b) it was used frequently enough to hope that proof may yet turn up, one way or the other. Therefore I trust that readers will note down and let me know of any Fred F. Foster sketches they come across. The details needed are the name, date and issue number of the periodical concerned, together with the title, sub-title (if any) and the first line of the sketch.

Incidentally it is possible that Ellis used Fred F. Foster for serials in the Mail Order papers. Surprisingly enough Ellis did write short serials specially for the Mail Order papers and a sketch in "Vickery's Fireside Visitor" (Vol. XIII, No. 15 (189), 1 May 1887), entitled "From an Invitation," is by Fred F. Foster, author of "The Pilgrim of Arragon," "Her Two Heroes" and "The Rival Boatmen." None of these three titles has yet been located.

\* \* \*

Between 25 Nov. 1882 and 23 Jan. 1886 a now little known story paper, "The Hearthstone," was published in Philadelphia. "The Hearthstone" relied mainly on "Saturday Night" (with which it finally merged) for material. The names of the authors of the serials reprinted were rarely altered, but frequent author changes were made for the reprints of sketches.

As a result 21 new names have been established as possible Ellis pseudonyms. In the proofs listed below the abbreviations H and SN have been used for "The Hearthstone" and "Saturday Night" respectively.

(A) Reprints of Sketches in "Saturday Night" by Geoffrey Randolph.

1. "All for Love" by Capt. E. L. Burton (H, Vol. III, No. 2, 29 Nov. 1884) (SN, Vol. XV, No. 1, 15 Sep. 1877).
2. "A Curious Combat" by Frank Felton (H, Vol. III, No. 20, 4 Apr. 1885) (SN, Vol. XIII, No. 30, 8 Apr. 1876).

(to be continued)

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